

## Potty-Training 101

Do you hate coming home to accidents on your carpet? Does your pup just not seem to “get” where he is supposed to relieve himself? Is potty-training taking away every ounce of sanity you are striving to maintain? Well, we have good news for you! Potty training can be broken down into a few easy steps that will allow for the most success during this sometimes frustrating process.

While in the potty-training stage there are only THREE places that your dog should be:

1. Outside going to the bathroom
2. Under your DIRECT supervision
3. In a crate or confinement area where they have been successful in the past

Always be sure to keep track of feeding times, potty times, playtimes, and nap times. Our dogs have more of a routine than we sometimes give them credit for. Being on top of when your pup last peed or pooped will help us determine their routine in relation to other daily activities, and when they may need to go in the future.



Ready to take your pup out? Great! Here are some guidelines to help ensure their success:

1. **Adding a cue** - Take your pup outside to their special designated “potty zone” once they start sniffing around, say your potty cue (aka “go potty,” “hurry up,” “piddle time,” etc.) This will help you out in the long run because, moving forward, your pup will associate this cue with the act of relieving themselves. The ability to potty on cue comes in handy when traveling or in new environments.
2. **“Puppy Parties”**- Watch your pup closely and when they have finished the act, immediately throw a “puppy party!” A “puppy party” should be exciting, it should include your praise in a happy tone, you dancing around, and your pup’s favorite treats. As they say, if you aren’t



embarrassed when throwing a “puppy party,” you’re probably not doing it right! We want our pups to associate going potty outside with being one of the best things that happens when you’re around. Throwing “puppy parties” will build up a positive emotional response to going potty outside, and will in turn have your pup ecstatic to show you he can hold it and go outside.

3. **It’s a “no go”** - It’s been 10 minutes and your pup still has not gone potty-- no biggie! Just put them on leash and walk them back inside. REMEMBER, there are only three places they should be when potty training, so if you are unable to watch them like a hawk you should play it safe and put them in their crate or confinement area. After approximately 20 minutes (depending on the pup’s age) bring them back outside to see if they are ready to go. If they still do not do their business, continue the confinement>outside>confinement>outside routine until they finally go. This can be a headache at first, but remember, once your pup has a strong history of “puppy parties” outside, he will be much more likely to offer the potty sooner.
4. **The dreaded accident** - OH NO... My puppy went potty inside! Don’t worry about it, accidents do happen and are to be expected. Here are some tips to help this situation:
  - Your pup is actively eliminating- **Don’t scream or get angry**, but rather make an interrupting noise (think clapping, or “pup pup pup!”) and immediately scoop them up to finish eliminating outside. When they do... “puppy party”! It is important not to scold the dog when he is actively eliminating, as this may only teach the puppy that going potty IN FRONT of you is a scary thing, which may result in your puppy hiding from you inside while they eliminate.
  - You found an accident from earlier- **Don’t scream or get angry**, there is nothing that can be done at this point. One of the ways dogs learn is by association, which means if something (a) happens, and another (b) immediately follows they will learn that (a) starts to predict (b). In order for learning to take place, an interruption would have to happen immediately. Scolding a dog for a prior accident will not inform the dog that the accident was wrong, but rather just decrease their trust in you and possibly create additional fears and anxieties.

Most importantly, always remember that our canine companions do not come pre-packaged with an understanding of what is “right” or “wrong.” It is up to us as their care takers to guide them through the learning process and help them live harmoniously in our homes. If you feel that your pup is having too difficult of a time potty-training, we recommend a visit to your veterinarian, and recommend that you reach out to a Certified Professional Dog Trainer to help guide you and your puppy through the potty-training process.